

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 65

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 131

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 65—Relative to Filipino communities.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 5, 2008.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 65, Furutani. Filipino communities.

This measure would recognize the critical role that Filipinos, and the Filipino community as a whole, have played in the social, economic, and political development of California throughout the state’s history, and encourage all federal, state, and local organizations to promote the preservation of Filipino history and culture, including the preservation of Filipino communities.

WHEREAS, Filipinos and Filipino American communities have played critical roles in the social, economic, and political development of California throughout the state’s history; and

WHEREAS, The first recorded arrival of Filipinos in what is now Morro Bay, California was on October 18, 1587, as sailors and crewmen on the Spanish galleons of the Manila-Acapulco mercantile, and Filipinos assisted Father Junipero Serra establish the California mission system in the late 1700s and early 1800s; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco’s Presidio was the site from which soldiers headed to the Philippine-American War were deployed, and beginning immediately after the colonization of the Philippines and the Philippine-American war, Filipinos began immigrating to San Francisco, as military personnel and as workers in the service sector of San Francisco as bellhops, dishwashers, servants, and cooks, and by the 1920s established a thriving community around Kearny and Jackson Streets they called Manilatown, and in the post-World War II era, in large Filipino communities in the Fillmore, South of Market, and Excelsior districts; and

WHEREAS, In the first decades of the 20th century, thousands of Filipinos began working in the agricultural fields throughout California, in such cities and regions as the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the central coast (Salinas, Santa Maria, Lompoc, Guadalupe), Imperial Valley, Orange County, the Inland Empire, Delano, Bakersfield, Coachella Valley, and the San Francisco Bay area, becoming a critical element in the growth and the political economy of the state, often enduring harsh labor conditions and poor wages, but creating a strong legacy of mutual support, militant strikes, and organizing for farm labor unionization; and

WHEREAS, These agricultural workers, led by Philip Vera Cruz and Larry Itliong, with their history of strong farm labor unions, would lead the

1965 Delano Grape Strike and partner with Mexican American workers in the creation of the United Farm Workers in Delano in 1967; and

WHEREAS, These agricultural workers also built Agbayani Village, a retirement facility for elderly Filipino farmworkers, called “manongs,” located at Forty Acres in Delano, Kern County; and

WHEREAS, At the turn of the century, Filipino students, farmworkers, and laborers in manufacturing and in the service sector began settling in the San Joaquin Delta area near and in Stockton, building a community that became the largest concentration of Filipinos outside of the Philippines through much of the 20th century, establishing a thriving six-block ethnic neighborhood they called “Little Manila” in downtown Stockton at the intersection of Lafayette and El Dorado Streets, which the Stockton City Council designated the “Little Manila Historical Site” in 2000, the first such designation in the country; and

WHEREAS, In the 1920s, Filipinos worked as laborers in the shipyards in Vallejo, and by the time World War II began, thousands of Filipinos worked as shipbuilders, and established a successful Filipino American community and business center in Vallejo; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, thousands of Filipinos from California served in the First and Second Filipino Infantry Regiments and were trained at Salinas and at Ford Ord, California, and stationed at Camp Beale near Sacramento and Camp Cooke near Santa Maria; and

WHEREAS, After discharge from the United States Navy following World War II, many Filipinos settled in National City and elsewhere in the County of San Diego, as well as in the Cities of West Long Beach and Wilmington, where they worked in the Long Beach shipyards, Terminal Island canneries, and as nurses and medical workers in the harbor area, creating flourishing Filipino American communities numbering in the tens of thousands; and

WHEREAS, The Filipino Community Center of the Los Angeles Harbor area in the City of Wilmington continues to serve as a model organization, facilitating community events such as weddings, baptisms, pageants, and fiestas; and

WHEREAS, Numerous other community-based institutions that take responsibility for the services, advocacy, and civic engagement needs of the Filipino American community exist today throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, In 1968, Filipino student organizers were instrumental in the leadership of the Third World Liberation Front that led to the founding of the nation’s first College of Ethnic Studies at California State University, San Francisco, which was part of the larger effort to democratize higher education for all; and

WHEREAS, From 1972 to 1986, Filipino American activists organized massive educational and political campaigns to restore civil liberties in the Philippines during the period of Martial Law in that country, while creating dynamic local responses to international politics; and

WHEREAS, From 1968 to 1977, Filipino American activists and residents of San Francisco’s International Hotel challenged local authorities and

private development in order to organize a multiracial and popular campaign to support affordable housing for Filipino and Chinese immigrants, placing people and the public good ahead of profit; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, the City of Los Angeles, home to over 120,000 Filipinos, designated a “Historic Filipinotown” district, the largest designation of this kind in the country; and

WHEREAS, From World War II to the present, federal, state and local redevelopment projects, freeway and highway construction, urban decay, demographic shifts, and poor city planning have destroyed a significant number of Filipino American historic sites and ethnic neighborhoods, and many of the remaining Filipino American communities and historic sites are in danger of being lost; and

WHEREAS, The Filipino American community in California numbers well over one million, nearly one-half of the total population of Filipinos in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Preserving our Filipino communities throughout California is critical to our state history and the preservation of Filipino culture, history, traditions, and other elements of this heritage; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature recognizes the critical role that Filipinos and Filipino American communities have played in the social, economic, and political development of California throughout the state’s history; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature encourages all federal, state, and local organizations to promote the preservation of Filipino history and culture, including the preservation of Filipino communities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.